

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 07714 251109Z

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SS-15 PM-04

L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 IO-13

/065 W

-----251213Z 036456 /41

R 251030Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8081

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 7714

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, MILI, JA

SUBJECT: DEFENSE COMMITTEE IN OFFING?

SUMMARY: AFTER YEARS OF DEBATE, LOWER HOUSE DEFENSE COMMITTEE MAY SOON BE ESTABLISHED, BUT CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO ESTABLISHMENT SHARPLY LIMIT COMMITTEE ROLE. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER YEARS OF ACRIMONIOUS DEBATE, LOWER HOUSE LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL PARTIES REACHED PRELIMINARY AGREEMENT MAY 20 TO ESTABLISH SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE. DECISION CAME AS COMPROMISE BETWEEN LDP AND DSP, LONGTIME ADVOCATES OF DIET DEFENSE FORUM, AND JSP AND JCP, WHICH HAVE OPPOSED, FEARING COMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT WOULD ULTIMATELY LEAD TO SDF "APPROVAL" AND RAISING OF JDA TO MINISTRY STATUS.

2. COMPROMISE, WHICH MUST YET BE FORMALLY APPROVED BY  
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 07714 251109Z

JSP, CALLS FOR: (A) SPECIAL (AS OPPOSED TO STANDING) COMMITTEE ON DEFENSE, WHICH MUST BE REESTABLISHED AT EACH DIET SESSION, (B) COMMITTEE DELIBERATION ONLY OF BROAD DEFENSE ISSUES WITH DISCUSSION OF JDA-RELATED BILLS SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITED, AND (C) FORMAL NAME OF COMMITTEE TO BE DECIDED LATER. IF JSP AGREES, COMMITTEE WOULD BE ESTABLISHED AT EXTRAORDINARY DIET SESSION FOLLOWING JULY

UPPER HOUSE ELECTION.

3. JOURNALIST AND PARTY SOURCES TOLD EMBOFFS MAY 24 THAT COMPROMISE PERMITTING ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE CAME AT LDP INITIATIVE AND RECENT EXPERIENCE WITH OKINAWA LAND LAW WAS PROXIMATE CAUSE. IN LOWER HOUSE CABINET COMMITTEE, DEFENSE ISSUES ALWAYS SCHEDULED LAST BECAUSE OF THEIR CONTROVERSIAL -- AND THEREFORE TIME CONSUMING -- NATURE. THIS CUSTOMARY PROCEDURE MEANT IN CASE OF OKINAWA LAND BILL INABILITY TO ASSURE TIMELY PASSAGE OF NEEDED LEGISLATION. LDP HOPES THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE TO CARRY OUT CONSIDERABLE DEBATE THERE, EVEN IF UNRELATED TO SPECIFIC BILLS, PERMITTING IT TO ARGUE FOR REDUCED DEBATE TIME IN OVERWORKED CABINET COMMITTEE. LDP ALSO BELIEVED IT DESIRABLE IN PRE-ELECTION PERIOD TO STEAL INITIATIVE FROM DSP, LONGTIME ADVOCATE OF DEFENSE COMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT. JSP AND JCP, ON OTHER HAND, APPARENTLY VIEW COMMITTEE AS NEW FORUM FOR ESPOUSAL OF THEIR OWN DEFENSE VIEWS, MARKEDLY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF LDP AND DSP. THUS, WHETHER COMMITTEE, IF ESTABLISHED, WILL LEAD TO MEANINGFUL DISCUSSION OF JAPAN'S DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS OR SIMPLY STAGE TO AIR WELL-KNOWN DIFFERENCES REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

4. NONETHELESS, FONOFF AND DEFENSE AGENCY OFFICIALS WELCOMED PROSPECTIVE COMMITTEE DESPITE ITS INHERENT LIMITATIONS. ECHOING COMMON REMARK, ONE JDA OFFICIAL CHARACTERIZED AGREEMENT AS "STEP IN RIGHT DIRECTION WHICH WILL BE DIFFICULT TO REVERSE."

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 07714 251109Z

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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